

# Vegetation Strategies

## Important Facts

1.

**What is it?** Vegetation strategies are tools that consider how prairie dogs respond to the plants around them in order to achieve a desired management outcome.

2.

**Why should I use it?** In addition to aiding in the prevention and/or mitigation of prairie dog occupancy, vegetation strategies can restore native plant biodiversity to recover prairie ecosystems, improve aesthetics, and promote coexistence.

3.

**How do I implement it?** Begin with an assessment of current vegetation, resource availability, and goals for the site. Recommended vegetation plans include a thoughtful and diversified selection of species appropriate for your project goals.

## Grazing Prescriptions

Intensive grazing from ungulates, including livestock, lowers vegetation heights, which can encourage prairie dog occupancy in grazed areas. Alternately, moving livestock around a pasture can create a variation of vegetation heights, providing the opportunity to encourage or discourage prairie dog occupancy in selected areas.

## Mowing Patterns

Tall and dense vegetation is less suitable to prairie dogs. Therefore, strategic mowing patterns can also be a tool to encourage and discourage prairie dog occupancy

## Vegetation Barriers & Buffers

Vegetation can act as a physical and visual barrier to thwart prairie dog occupancy. For more, see the "Barriers and Buffers" fact sheet.

## Prairie Dog Resistant Vegetation

Plants that are resistant, deterrent, or resilient to prairie dog behavior share common traits: prickly, odiferous, milky, sticky, and low growing or prostrate. The list below is only a snapshot of plants that can coexist on prairie dog sites - hundreds of plants have been documented. Examples include:

- Blue flax
- Primrose
- Fetid marigold
- Blue grama
- Showy and plains Milkweed
- Scarlet globemallow
- Blue bells
- Sand lily
- Tall and dwarf rabbitbrush
- Curly Cup Gumweed
- Maximilian sunflower
- Rocky Mountain bee plant



**Pro Tip!** Managers can work with prairie dogs to strategically design fire breaks. Restoration areas could further benefit from plants that are fire resistant *and* prairie dog resilient to work toward fire mitigation goals.